

CLMPTO 10/1/04 JW

Cancel Claims 6-13,

Add Claims 14-30,

14. (New) A method of dynamically negotiating a packet header size, comprising:
identifying and maintaining a list of supported fields in a network communications packet header, the list listing at least default positions and default lengths of the supported fields;

identifying and maintaining another list of packet header fields utilized in a current session for network communications between a master device and a client device, the list listing at least actual positions and actual lengths of the utilized packet header fields; and

dynamically negotiating, between the master device and the client device, through use of extension bits and the lists, changes in at least one supported field of the utilized packet header of the current session due to demands in a network communication between the master device and the client device.

15. (New) The method according to Claim 14, wherein dynamically negotiating comprises:

receiving a request from the client device at the master device requesting a change in the utilized packet header;

confirming with the master device from the list of supported fields that the requested change is allowed; and

granting with the master device the requested change in the packet header for the current session for communications between the master device and the client device.

16. (New) The method according to Claim 15, wherein the change in packet header is implemented for the packet headers for selected packets being communicated between the master device and the client device having the extension bits being set to selected values.

17. (New) The method according to Claim 16, wherein the change in packet header is further utilized for communications between the master device and network devices related to the client device.

18. (New) The method according to Claim 14, wherein dynamically negotiating comprises negotiating to extend at least one field of the packet header of the current session.

19. (New) The method according to Claim 18, wherein the field of the packet header extended is a client session identification field.

20. (New) The method according to Claim 14, wherein dynamically negotiating further comprises:

communicating between the master device and the client device with the changed packet header for packets utilizing the extended bits of a selected value; and
communicating between the master device and another client device using the currently utilized packet header.

21. (New) The method according to Claim 20, wherein the changed packet header includes a changed client session identification field.

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22. (New) The method according to Claim 14, wherein dynamically negotiating further comprises re-defining, with the master device, a new definitional format of a basic packet format for the client device.

23. (New) The method according to Claim 22, wherein in response to client session identification field format being expanded, notifying the client devices of the new definitional format for the basic packet format.

24. (New) A network system for dynamically negotiating a packet header size, comprising:

- a master device;
- client devices in communication with the master device;
- a list of supported fields in a network packet header including at least default positions and default lengths of the supported fields;
- another list of packet header fields supported for a current session with actual positions and actual lengths of the packet header fields; and
- wherein the master device dynamically negotiates through use of extended bits and the lists changes in the supported fields of the packet header for the current session due to demands in the network communication between the master device and the client devices.

25. (New) The network system according to Claim 24, wherein the master device re-negotiates with the client devices to extend a field of the packet header.

26. (New) The network system according to Claim 25, wherein the extended field of the packet header is a client session identification field.

27. (New) The network system according to Claim 24, wherein:

- the master device communicates with selected client devices communicating with the extended bits set to selected values utilizing a new field format; and
- the master device maintains communications with other client devices utilizing a current field format.

28. (New) The network system according to Claim 27, wherein the new field format is a client session identification field format.

29. (New) The network system according to Claim 27, wherein the master devices re-define a new definitional format of a basic packet format for the client devices communicating with the extension bits set to the selected values.

30. (New) The network system according to Claim 29, wherein the master device, in response to client session identification field format being expanded, notifies the client devices of the new definitional format for the basic packet format.

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